

# HAWKS FLY INTO STATE!

Look for full coverage of the football team's first state appearance since 1996 in the January 7 issue.

Orchestra students welcome return of annual Halloween concert

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## SENIORS APPLY TO COLLEGE DURING APPLICATION WEEK



Photo by MS. RITTER

Twelfth graders were invited to room 246 to work with staff members on various aspects of the college application process.

By MYRA SINCHI  
Quill staff writer

College Application Week took place October 25-29 to help encourage students to apply for college and to further assist the students who have already started the process. Students received a pass to go down to the Write Place and Math Lounge in room 246, where Ms. Ritter and Ms. Warndahl provided help with applying to college, completing the

FAFSA and locating scholarships. "College Application Week is a week in which the Minnesota state colleges and universities waive their application fee. During this week, we offer college application help to Cooper seniors," Ritter, who is the 12th grade student counselor, said. During their visit to room 246, students gained a better idea of how applying to college works and how to take the next steps

after applying. This week was of benefit to participating students due to colleges waiving their application fees. Additionally, students who were already in the process of applying did not have to worry about any fees if they applied during that week. "The reason we issue a pass for each senior to come to apply is that the state colleges [like] Minnesota State University, Mankato; Moorhead; Bemidji; St. Cloud;

Southwest Minnesota State; and all of the technical and community colleges waive their application fee to apply to their institution," Warndahl, who oversees Cooper's College and Career Center, said. "Some waive their application fee the whole month of October, but some only waive it just the last week of October." The goal by the end of the week, according to Warndahl, is that students should have applied to at least one

Annual event allows expectant graduates to apply to Minnesota schools without paying fees

technical college, a two-year college or a four-year college. Students who were not planning on applying or unsure about their plans were still encouraged to apply to at least a community college in case they change their minds later on in the future. "Applying to a community college is always a good backup choice if you do not know where you want to go to college," Warndahl said. "At a community college, you are able to complete general classes and then always transfer to a four-year college. If you attend a four-year college, the first two years you will be completing general classes that are required for a four-year degree." College Application Week also benefited students who attended by helping them learn how to request transcripts, ask any questions they had about their college applications, and start the process of filling out their FAFSA. Christopher Pinzon (12) said the ability to work through questions with an adult was helpful. "College Application Week benefited me by having any questions I needed answered and by encouraging me to apply no matter what," he said. Even though the week is over, Warndahl and Ritter still invite students to head to the College and Career Center to fill out their applications.

## Get Ready program helps students aim for future

Group's organizers work with Hawks in grades 9-11 to develop plans for college and career opportunities beyond their high school years

By DAMARIUS HAMILTON  
Quill staff writer

Get Ready is a program at Cooper designed to help students look toward their future education and career opportunities. "Get Ready helps students from underserved communities realize their aspirations through education and career advancement," Mr. Emery, who helps oversee the program at Cooper, said. Get Ready, which is based in room 246B in Cooper's English circle, is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The program works with schools, students and families "to confront and dismantle the systems of oppression that prevent students from underserved communities from pursuing their chosen postsecondary pathways," Emery said. Among the various approaches Get Ready uses to help students are the group's efforts to build the infrastructure for students and their families to actively engage in school decision making. Additionally, they try to create partnerships with other organizations to promote sustainability in the program. Finally, they develop culturally relevant programming for students and their families. Emery said that students who are interested in getting involved in Get Ready can do so just by asking about it. "All Cooper ninth, 10th and 11th grade students are Get Ready students. Students do not have to sign up. We provide workshop materials for advisory classes and we provide in-person classroom workshops," Emery said. Students who get involved in the program have access to a number of resources to help them plan for the future. Among other activities, the group gives students access to college field trips, college fair visits, career exploration field trips and career fair visits. The group also helps students with the practical steps in getting ready for college, including



Photo by MR. EMERY

Get Ready hosted a summer 2021 program in which many Hawks took part. financial aid workshops, academic support in high school and an introduction to postsecondary curriculum. "Get Ready is the go-to place for answers to your questions for career and college," Emery said.

GET READY PROGRAM continues on page 2

## Older students weigh various locations for eating lunch

While options are limited for freshmen, students in other grades can spend lunch in alternative locations around Cooper

By DEVIN GRAY  
Quill staff writer

We have all heard the old saying that lunch is an important meal of the day. During the school day, lunch is a time when a lot of students have to congregate in the same areas to eat. With the large number of students at the school, it is important for students to find where they want to sit to enjoy their food. While the cafeteria is the main, official place where lunch is eaten, not everyone wants to sit in the cafeteria to enjoy their food. This school year, students have other options like the front foyer, the commons upstairs, the commons near the gym and the courtyard behind the school depending on their grades. Administrative Intern Mr. Nelson said that

the front foyer, the commons upstairs, the commons near the gym and the courtyard behind the school are separate eating areas from the cafeteria that each have different purposes. "During A lunch, 10th grade students can eat in the front foyer area," he said. "There are only 32 seats available." In addition to cleaning up after themselves, the sophomores using the foyer have one main behavior expectation, according to Nelson. "Students need to be seated," he said. Meanwhile, Nelson said that 11th and 12th graders can eat in the upstairs commons area above the cafeteria and the community gym commons on first floor during their respective lunches. Nelson added that 12th grade students also have the option of eating outside near the "tennis courts when the weather is right."

For upperclassmen using these options, Nelson said that certain expectations still need to be followed. "Students are expected to stay seated while eating and to choose one area," he said. According to Nelson, eating privileges in these special locations will be taken away if behavior expectations are not met. Additionally, if students do not clean up after themselves, Nelson said access to these areas will be taken away for one or two days, if not longer, which happened during the week of November 8. For students who can follow the rules, these alternative eating locations have benefits. "It gives students a quieter place to eat for students with anxiety," Nelson said. EATING LUNCH continues on page 5



College Possible ready for chance to help in person

Obstacles to mentoring during online learning have gone away this school year

By NAIMA HUSSEN  
Quill staff writer

Cooper’s College Possible program is back in person after a year of distance learning.

College Possible is a national college access and success organization that provides students from low-income family backgrounds with support for getting into college and beyond. College Possible coaches work with high school juniors and seniors to provide necessary preparation for college and additional coaching once college actually begins.

“College Possible helped me gain more opportunities to practice the ACT and made the process for applying to college easier,” Echi Lee (12) said. “I had siblings who were in College Possible. I followed in their steps.”

During junior year, College Possible gives students the opportunity to take as many practice ACT tests as they want free of charge. Students can also develop a plan for their upcoming year as a senior.

“College Possible helped me feel more confident and comfortable about my college choices,” Valerie Lee (12) said. “College Possible takes the time and effort to get to know you as a person.”

Meanwhile, during senior year, College Possible helps students make a top-five list, apply to school and get financial aid.

“College Possible is the best thing I have done for myself in high school,” Fatima Koroma (12) said. “The College Possible coaches have been so helpful during my research on different colleges and last-minute questions when I was applying.”

The relationships between the coaches and the students is something College Possible is praised for. This was more challenging last year, when College Possible happened during distance learning. Current members said the connection between other students in College Possible and the coaches is stronger during in-person meetings.

“There is no difference besides the connections going off and on, but I prefer the in-person meetings more than the online ones,” Echi Lee said.

Being confident in one’s choice of pursuing a future education is important to everyone in College Possible.

“By the end of the year, I hope to be confident about the college that I’m going to and knowing I did everything to prepare myself for college,” Valerie Lee said.

Many of the members of College Possible said they like the process of making friends with people in the same situations as them.

“I enjoy meeting others. It’s amazing to see how many people are just like me,” Echi Lee said.

Agreeing with Lee was Koroma, who cited her relationships with her classmates and coaches as being important aspects of College Possible.

“I enjoy having coaches who know what they are talking about and who have answers to my many questions because Google can only do so much,” she said.

Another popular aspect of the program is the ability to meet with college representatives in person.

“What I find most enjoyable is going to college visits because College Possible is always providing visits from a lot of different colleges to answer our questions,” Valerie Lee said.

The requirements to become part of College Possible include a minimum GPA of 2.0, eligibility for free-and-reduced lunch or a Pell Grant, and a desire to attend a four-year institution for a bachelor’s degree. U.S. citizenship is not required to take part in the program. The program begins during the fall of one’s junior year and continues until the student graduates from college.

Robotics team hopes to build on success

After making it to state for the first time in spring 2021, robotics team members are optimistic about returning in 2022



Photo by MS. COUTTS

The robotics tournaments will return to an in-person format this year following last year’s virtual approach.

By JACK ATKINSON  
Quill staff writer

The Cooper robotics team is hoping to follow its successful state run during the 2020-2021 season with more victories during the 2021-2022 school year.

Member of the Hawks team, which is named Cooper Robotics FRC Team 4277 Thingamajiggers, work together to design, program and run robots that have to complete certain tasks in a competition format against teams from other schools. According to team captain Andrew Tran (12), a team practice involves working on the various components that make their robot operational.

“A typical practice looks like us splitting into different groups with specialized tasks for a few hours. These tasks can include things like programming a new robot feature, building a specific robot subsystem, practicing

driving the robot or even making mock game elements out of wood,” he said.

The work done in these practice sessions is intended to get the team’s machine ready for the various official and unofficial competitions throughout the season. For instance, the team just had an unofficial tournament hosted at Prior Lake High School at the end of November.

“It [was] the first time that [we were] able to compete with our completed robot physically against other teams. In January, there is a kickoff event that we’ll attend that will reveal our game and challenge for the 2022 season and begin our build season for our 2022 robot. We are still awaiting confirmation on whether we will have an official in-person tournament for the 2022 season,” Tran said.

The pandemic made for an unusual 2020-2021 season that saw the

robotics team members working remotely and connecting with each other through Google Meet.

“With COVID 19, last season [was] challenging as we were meeting mainly remotely,” team advisor Ms. Coutts said. “Our team was up to the challenge by remotely programming and executing the autonomous operation of the robot via VPN. Our team designed our robot to be able to navigate the field by itself and always know where it is.”

In fact, despite the challenges of COVID last year, the Cooper squad enjoyed several moments of success. For example, the team won the Ford Motor Company Autonomous Award, which Coutts said celebrates the team’s “consistent, reliable, high-performance robot operation during autonomously managed actions.”

What is more, the team qualified to compete at a virtual Minnesota state meet on May 29, 2021 after placing

fifth in their division during a virtual competition last spring that featured 29 teams from around the world. This was the Hawks’ first state appearance in the team’s nine year history.

“We were ranked 236 of 1,302 globally and we were ranked 16 of 100 Minnesota teams that entered the at-home challenge. That means this team was in the top 20 percent of FRC FIRST robotics teams in the world,” Coutts said.

While it is the hope of the team to repeat its 2020-2021 success this school year, Tran said the process of acquiring new skills and having fun are equally important parts of being in robotics.

“I enjoy the tasks that I’m able to do that I’m not normally able to do anywhere else. I enjoy designing robot parts in CAD, programming the robot, using power tools, building parts of the robot and so much more,” he said.

Tran added that the team atmosphere is another important part of robotics, especially now that everyone can be together.

“I enjoy working with the robotics team primarily for the people that I’m able to work with. All the members are dedicated to making an amazing robot every year. All of the mentors volunteer lots of their time to help us out,” he said.

Although the current season is already underway, it is not too late for interested students to get involved with robotics. Tran said there are many benefits to the students who decide to take part in the team.

“They benefit by acquiring STEM skills that would benefit them in future careers. These STEM skills involve programming, CAD, mechanical design, electronics, wiring and more,” Tran said.

In addition, Tran said another benefit is potentially financial in nature.

“FIRST, the organization that runs the robotic competitions that we compete in, partners with many colleges to give out millions of dollars in scholarships,” Tran said.

New Cooper NHS officers elected in October

The 2021-2022 leadership team is beginning to plan a number of events in which the group’s members can take part

By SHENG VANG  
Quill staff writer

Four new National Honor Society (NHS) officers were elected in October with the following as the final results: Andrew Tran (12) as president, Ava Bipes (12) as vice president, Estrella Rincon Hernandez (11) as secretary and Yordanose Mulat (12) as treasurer.

Following the first 2021-2022 NHS meeting in September, the election of four new officers took place. Each new officer expressed different thoughts and feelings about being elected as a leader in NHS as they continue to show the organization’s four pillars of scholarship, character, leadership and service.

Tran, who said he enjoys helping others, sees this election as “the perfect opportunity to help as [he] can lead the organizing of volunteering and fundraising events.”

“I feel really excited about being president of the NHS as we have a lot of members this year that can help make a big impact on the school and local community,” Tran said.

Meanwhile, Bipes said she feels honored to be elected vice president by her peers.



Photo by SHENG VANG

Mulat, Rincon Hernandez, Tran and Bipes (left to right) are ready to lead.

“I decided to run because I enjoy being in positions of leadership and NHS is a great opportunity to be more involved in our Cooper community,” Bipes said.

Similar to Tran and Bipes, new secretary Rincon Hernandez said she feels excited and is “truly honored to be chosen as secretary, since the rest of the officers are seniors.” She decided to run for secretary because she thinks she has many qualities that would best

fit the secretary position.

According to new treasurer Mulat, having experience in volunteering as her church treasurer helped her decide to run for this position.

“It is a great leadership role and it feels good to be able to contribute to the group,” she said.

Other than showing the four pillars of leadership, character, scholarship and service, NHS Advisor Ms. Kilsdonk emphasized that the leader-

ship of “each officer is to represent the society membership and school with integrity.”

Tran said the roles and responsibilities of being the president of NHS include “presiding over [the] monthly meetings, preparing agendas and other resources for every meeting, keeping everyone on the same page with all [the] plans...and making sure everything runs smoothly.”

Working with and helping Tran are Bipes, Rincon Hernandez and Mulat. Bipes’ roles as vice president are to “help plan and run [the] service and volunteering projects as well as facilitating [the] meetings.” In turn, the responsibilities of Rincon Hernandez include things like “taking attendance during NHS meetings, taking notes during the meetings [and] keeping things organized.” Finally, Mulat said her responsibilities are being “in charge of fundraising and also keeping track of service projects and how they should be executed.”

In addition to the roles and responsibilities that each officer holds, Kilsdonk said they hope “to lead the

**NEW NHS OFFICERS** continues on page 6

GET READY PROGRAM HELPS STUDENTS AIM FOR FUTURE continued from page 1

The support Get Ready provides to students happens during the school day as well as outside of it.

“We provide resources and information through advisory classes in addition to in-person classroom visits,” Emery said. “Get Ready also offers support during HLL on Tuesdays and Thursdays.”

Additionally, students can schedule an appointment with Emery or the other coordinator, Ms. Thao, in room 246B.

According to Emery, there are a few ways students benefit from their involvement in Get Ready.

“Students gain personal power, self discovery and a plan to achieve their goals for their future after high school,” he said.

From the student perspective, the benefits of Get Ready relate to the rela-

tionships they have developed with their mentors.

“I was introduced to Get Ready on back-to-school night,” Katrina Roberts (10) said. “I went to the table and immediately was greeted with kindness and two individuals who truly cared for my future. While I was at the stand, we talked about my want to go to a HBCU and they told me they could help me make my decision.”

Also first encountering the program during the high school orientation event was Claire Choukalas (9).

“During welcome week for the new freshmen, I was told anyone could join and everyone should join. I got involved with the Get Ready program because they seemed like the best place to learn about college and what could come next in life, and

as someone who wants to be a writer, that information could really help me, along with knowing that I have a place to go if I have questions,” Choukalas said.

Once they connected with Get Ready, the access to academic help is something each student said they have enjoyed about the program.

“I have gotten academic help from Mr. Emery,” Nicholas Hott (10) said. “He has a HLL and will keep you on track with work and will get on you if you fall behind.”

Agreeing with Hott is Roberts, who said these support sessions were helpful academically and personally.

“When school started, I saw that they had an HLL and I went to it faithfully. As I was going, I learned so much about how my present decisions can lead

to my important future ones and how it all starts with me,” Roberts said.

While the immediate support from the Get Ready coordinators was mentioned by many students as being a chief benefit of the program, they also pointed out the program’s focus on the future as being another highlight.

“The Get Ready program is helping students get ready for life, letting you know what you need or what to know or expect on what your life path is going to be,” Jazzlyn Bynum (10) said.

Echoing this same thought is Hott, who said the program has helped him start thinking about what comes after high school.

“If you’re not sure what you want to do with your future, I think it would be good if you join too and explore your opportunities,” he said.



# Lunch trash is turning school into landfill

Upperclassmen leaving for open lunch or eating outside are causing problems that are hurting everyone else at Cooper

By ERIN CHUNN  
*Quill* staff writer

Open lunch is a great privilege and an even better alternative to school lunch, but for some reason, that privilege leaves the school entrances and parking lots looking like landfills. It's gross and we are too grown to not know how to put trash in a trash can. The back of the school by the tennis courts looks even worse. It's about to start snowing, and once the snow melts, all that's going to be left is old trash. For students who complain about the lack of janitors, y'all sure love to litter. It's crazy. When Head Principal Mr. Herman threatens to end open lunch, I can't even blame him.

Recently, my gym class was going outside for tennis and I was walking with my friend to the courts. As my friend and I were walking and talking, I felt something squishy under my foot. I looked over and my friend was painted white. I had stepped on a sour cream packet and sprayed my friend. Before I realized it, he was covered in sour cream. How do you even atone for something like that? He was walking around, smelling like old dairy for the rest of the day. I just felt terrible. Honestly, the fault for this rests with the student who left that packet on the ground. Clearly, the biggest flaw about open lunch is lazy students who don't want to walk four feet to the nearest trash can.

Of course, we're grateful for the janitorial assistance we do receive, but Cooper clearly needs help with cleaning up after lunch, especially during a



Photo by ERIN CHUNN

The location that is seeing the biggest garbage problem is the eating area by the tennis courts.

pandemic, when being sanitary is literally the highest priority. People just genuinely don't care about cleanliness, which is to be expected. However, the lunch areas in the school are already crowded, which makes open lunch even more important. If they ended open lunch, the lunch lines would go into the hallways. There would be no seats and there'd be 300 people one foot apart with no masks eating in each other's faces. So, of course I want to keep all lunch options open, but we have to acknowledge that the school property is suffering from litter.

I will admit the situation got much better when Herman

threatened to revoke everyone's open lunch privileges after the first few weeks of school. However, since then, we slid back into our old ways and recently got the tennis court area revoked. At the start of November, the courtyard was closed off, which heavily impacted spacing in the lunchroom. Making matters worse is that the crowd increase does not represent even half of the open lunch students. If the parking lot isn't kept clean, then leaving campus is going to be out of the question. It's now a matter of how much we as students want to keep open lunch privileges available.

Overall, open lunch is a

positive solution to both spacing in the cafeteria and allowing people to have variety and control over their diets. One of the only negative results is the trash left on the property, which has gotten to the point where every three feet there is litter. This not only affects classes that go outside but the environment as a whole. Do you want a habitable Earth for your future grandchildren? After the tennis court eating area got revoked, it became clear that now's the time for action. Let's clean up after ourselves like the capable teenagers we are because, at this point, just the image our tennis court area gives off is embarrassing.

# Hallway behavior is causing travel issues between classes

From playfighting to congregating near doorways, there are many ways in which students become obstacles during passing time

## From the Editors

Imagine this scenario: You have to get to your social studies class on the third floor. However, you are coming from your choir class, which is all the way near the cafeteria on the second floor. By the time you get into the hallway after the bell rings, it is already crowded. From a distance, you can see a group of students standing in the hallway, talking and laughing. They are telling each other stories while blocking the walking path, despite all of the other students who are trying to pass by them to get to class on time.

Not surprisingly, scenes like this play themselves out every day and nearly every period. The result is that many students end up getting to class late because they can't make it through the hallways. While this behavior is seen mostly from younger students, Hawks in all four grades can be seen acting this way. This kind of behavior in the hallways cannot be tolerated.

Most of the time, the hallway congestion is caused by people stopping and talking. Of course, freshmen are new to high school, so you can un-



Photo by NOLAN ANDLER

Proper traffic flow in the stairways is critical for students to be on time.

derstand why they are looking forward to seeing their friends in between their classes to talk. But when you see this same behavior from the older students, you can understand how the crowds in the hallways quickly form.

One reason this is upsetting is because the hallways are too congested when people are grouped together in a small space. Some people are trying to get to class on time while others slow them down by meeting in the hallways with their friends

and talking. Nobody likes that.

Another issue is that you might accidentally bump into someone while you are trying to hurry to class. This could be a problem when you try to apologize to them and they don't take the apology the right way. This sometimes turns into a verbal conflict that can then become a really big problem if a physical fight breaks out in the hallway.

While stopping and talking in the hallways is an issue, there are other bad hallway behaviors as well. For example, you see students taking pictures in the hallways, play fighting in the hallways or stopping suddenly in the hallways when they see their friends. All of these things make passing time a challenge.

The school has a large number of students in it. Therefore, the hallways should only be for one use: walking to class. One way we could all make the hallways a better place for each other is by using passing time to get to class and meeting with friends after school. If we need to catch up with friends during the day, we can walk and talk as we move through the hallways. This is one way for us to show respect to each other and to avoiding clogging up the hallways.

# Passing time should increase to help students

Five minutes is not enough time for Hawks to get from class to class

By MARIAH RILEY  
*Quill* staff writer

The return to in-person learning this year brought with it a return to passing time. While students had 10 minutes between each class during distance learning, we only have five minutes to make it from room to room in between classes this school year. Now that we have arrived at second quarter, I have come to the conclusion that the five-minute passing time at Cooper may be too short.

First of all, I think that passing time is too short because of health reasons. For instance, what if somebody has a really bad breathing problem? Breathing issues might make a student walk more slowly, which means they can't make it to class on time. An issue like this is more important right now when everyone is being asked to wear masks.

Another reason that I think passing time is too short is that students sometimes have important things to take care of during passing time. For example, some students need more time to get stuff from their lockers. Mean-

A majority of students are trying to do the right thing at school and these students would benefit from a few extra minutes to take care of their personal needs between each class.

while, other students may need to go to the bathroom without having to miss class time to do so. Five minutes is not enough time to do these things and make it to class on time.

At the same time, there are arguments why passing time is the correct length. Some students are only using passing time to play around in the hallway instead of getting to class. Obviously, these students should be getting to class and not just hanging out in the hallways. By only giving them five minutes to do so, the hope is that they will eventually make it to class. However, other than this scenario, I think passing time should be longer.

While too much passing time could lead to some bad behaviors, I believe there are some good reasons why passing time should be increased. A majority of students are trying to do the right thing at school and these students would benefit from a few extra minutes to take care of their personal needs between each class. I hope the administration rethinks passing time in the future. Even an extra minute or two could mean a lot to students.

## The Quill

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NSPA



Infrastructure bill will be of benefit to all Americans

While its creation has fallen along party lines, the bill's impact will be positive for everyone

By NAIMA HUSSEN  
Quill staff writer

President Biden recently signed an infrastructure bill that he received from Congress. The bill was a \$1.2 trillion, bipartisan effort that was backed by the majority of the Senate that needed approval by the House of Representatives. At one point, there was also a \$1.75 trillion Build Back Better plan, which had more momentum in the House. Both bills are in response to America's infrastructure, which has been in decline for decades.

I first noticed how bad our infrastructure was when I took a trip to Germany to visit my aunt. I was shocked at the access to public transportation in Germany compared to the United States. Public transportation in the United States is mostly restricted to big cities, while in Germany, my aunt's little town of Weimar had great public transportation.

While I am happy with the bill Biden signed, I was more in favor of the Build Back Better plan because, in addition to addressing infrastructure, it would have increased our social safety net, combated climate change and improved our immigration system. Overall, I mostly support both plans because they would improve the lives of average Americans.

The first reason I like the bipartisan plan is that \$110 billion will be allocated for our roads and bridges in American cities, as well as Puerto Rican highways, which were damaged by Hurricane Maria. According to *The New York Times*, an investment of \$65 million will expand broadband to rural and low-income areas. In total, approximately \$14 billion of the total price tag would be used to help lower internet bills for low-income citizens. Additionally, the U.S. public transportation system will receive \$39 billion in funding to upgrade its systems nationwide. Finally, new bus routes will be constructed to make them more accessible to seniors and disabled Americans.

While I like all of these provisions, there are some things I preferred about the Build Back Better plan. Perhaps the most important is that this plan would have spent more money on social issues. In fact, it provided \$400 billion for childcare and universal preschool for every three and four year old in America, which would have helped more American women go into the workforce. Additionally, there was \$555 billion for clean energy and climate change with the aim of cutting greenhouse gas pollution by more than a gigaton by 2030. This move could have created more clean air and water, and led to hundreds of thousands of jobs.

My only complaints about the Build Back Better bill relate to the paid family and medical leave and the free two years of community college. These elements were first proposed by the president but didn't make it into the framework of the eventual bill due to negotiations over its proposed cost. Paid family and medical leave is something every industrialized country has with the exception of the United States. What is more, two years of free community college would improve our education system and lower the total cost of college. It would have been preferable if these two items remained in the bill.

Ultimately, the two infrastructure bills would be great for the improvement of American lives economically and socially. The bipartisan plan will improve our infrastructure, with roads and bridges getting the most funding. The U.S. public transportation system will improve and there will be more routes for elderly and disabled Americans. I encourage everyone to call their senators and representatives to thank them for passing the bipartisan bill and to keep working on the issues raised by the Build Back Better plan.

Social media is being ruined by bullying

There is a fine line between reasonably calling out bad behavior online and engaging in "cancel culture"

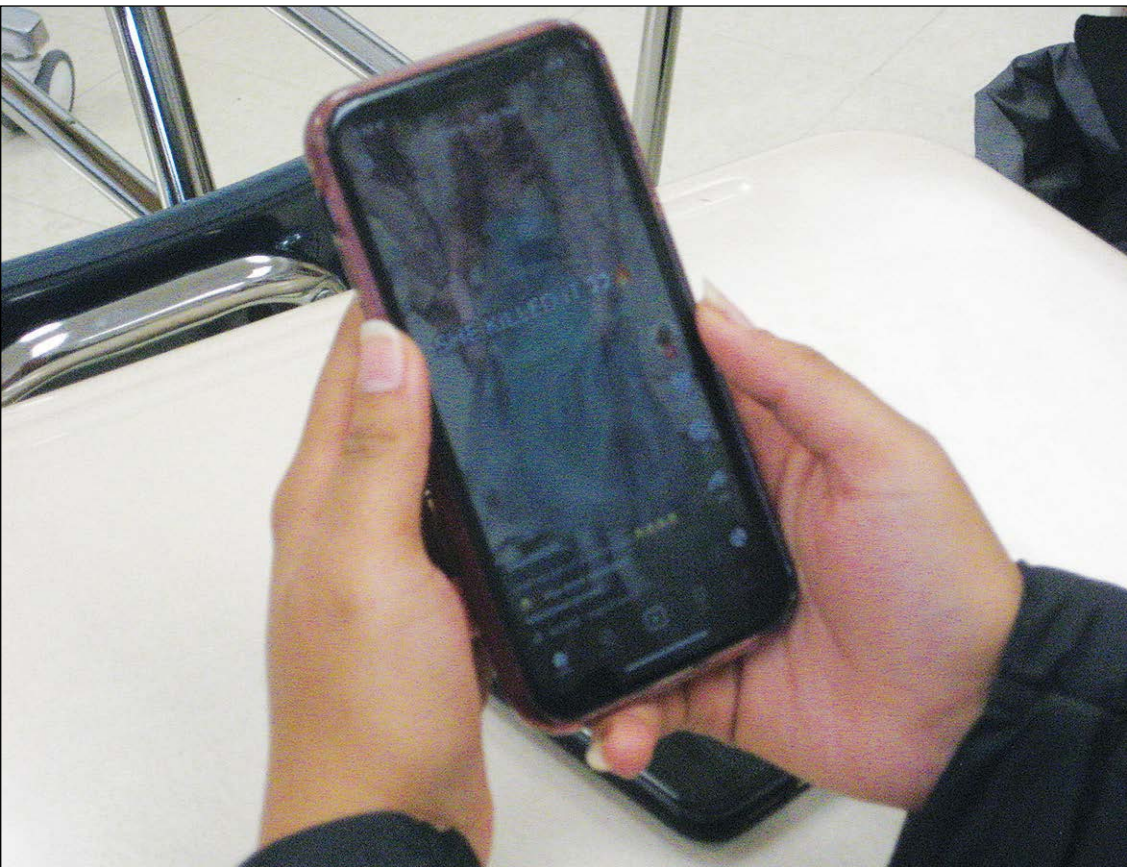


Photo by ERIN CHUNN

The social media apps students use on a daily basis can be a hotbed for hateful attacks.

By ERIN CHUNN  
Quill staff writer

Instagram, Snapchat and, more recently, TikTok have been the social media apps that our generation uses the most. Each of these apps has a different individual vibe. For example, I would never post my Snapchat story on Instagram because I have different targeted audiences on different apps. The one thing that's the same on each app, however, is cyberbullying. The word feels so outdated, but once a joke goes too far on the internet,

there's nothing else to call it. I think cyberbullying is annoying, but it's the main appeal of social media for some people.

Social media comes in handy when you're bored, waiting somewhere or avoiding eye contact, but being attached to an app is kind of exhausting. It's exhausting because there's always a new trend, a new influencer and, unfortunately, a new person that has something nasty to say. Being on social media is one thing, but posting yourself? That's deep. People will avoid being targeted by not posting anything about

themselves but still have the audacity to come for someone else on social media.

I used to wonder why everyone can't mind their own business on these apps until I realized that no one would log on if there wasn't something to see. People always want to laugh at someone until they become a joke. Don't get me wrong: sometimes it is just a harmless joke between friends. However, stuff gets blown out of proportion so quickly. I think cyberbullying definitely evolved along with social media, but it is less discussed because it is

looked down upon to be offended by anything on the internet.

Of course, you can shut off your screen, but nothing disappears from the internet, so you can never really escape it. People can dig and find stuff you don't want to be found and that's the root of cancel culture today. I believed cancel culture was good at first; disgusting people were being called out and people would unfollow them. However, once cancel culture became cyberbullying someone you don't like until they delete their accounts, it is no longer valid. I believe no one on the internet is qualified to cancel anyone else.

I think social media status is starting to go to people's heads. They think they have the power to do and say what they want, when it's just all so lame. It's one thing if you have a personal beef with someone and social media is the only way to contact them, but if you're just starting stuff for no reason, you are, without a doubt, lame.

At the end of the day, regardless of the situation, cyberbullying is the dumbest thing you could waste your time doing. Leaving uncalled-for, negative comments makes it look like you want attention, which is pitiful. Calling people "soft" for not allowing disrespect on their accounts doesn't make sense because allowing disrespect is what would make a person truly soft. Additionally, hopping on the cancel wave seems childish as well. If they don't deserve their platform, then do what's necessary, but don't overdo it. I often wonder what social media would be like without hate. Hopefully, we can work toward a future like that.

Return to in-person learning has its drawbacks

A year of going to school online has made clear some of the downsides to attending school physically

By MYRA SINCHI  
Quill staff writer

The start of the 2021-2022 school year meant that we were finally back together in person. After a year of being apart, students are still adjusting to the old routine. Returning back to school comes with positives and negatives. I was in the middle of my sophomore year when COVID first took place. I remember being told we were going to return the following Monday, and then that Monday turned into three weeks, and then those three weeks turned into the next school year as well. Online school was very tough and it brought a lot of students down. Now that we are back in person, I feel there are both positives and negatives that come with it.

The decision to bring students back to in-person learning is positive because it sparked happiness among students and staff, who have enjoyed seeing each other since our return. As I walk around the hallways, it is clear that people are starting to get back to the old routine before COVID hit. Teachers and students seem excited to finally be back in person and be able to communicate face to face.

This excitement is in contrast to distance learning. Online school was very hard for me and a lot of others. I remember struggling to wake up at 7 a.m. and having to open the computer. I was always



Photo by NOLAN ANDLER

Crowded hallways are one thing that has been hard to get used to this year.

tempted to continue sleeping. The days felt as if they were on repeat. Every day became the same routine and, eventually, I felt myself going downhill. Being back in person is a positive because it has allowed us return to normal schooling.

Another reason returning back to in-person learning is positive is because it is better for students to manage their time. When I was doing online learning, I did not manage homework, work and my social life well. The online environment made school feel more like a choice than a requirement. Most students fell behind in school when COVID hit and that is because time management became a problem. I tried my best to log on to my computer in the mornings; however, most

of the time, I would not be paying attention or I would be sleeping. My homework would be worked on only when I felt like doing it. From what I noticed, most students stopped logging on and let their GPA drop due to no work being done. This is an important reason why it is good to be back in-person learning, which allows students to be more productive and use their time more wisely.

Although there are positives to being back in person, there are also negatives. Returning back in person can be negative because you have less control over scheduling. The school takes up the most time during a student's day, making it hard to balance school with your social life and work life.

Many students over the time of quarantine spent their extra time working and bettering themselves; now that school is back in person, there is not much time to do that. This issue is important because, as critical as school is to one's future success, it can be very time-consuming.

Another reason in-person learning can be negative is that the risk of COVID is higher when we are all together. Everyone is back in person and there is not as much social distancing as there was during the in-person learning that took place at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Most students do very well with keeping their masks on, but social distancing and eating food in classrooms could be worked on more. I feel this issue is important because it is best for everyone to stay safe and COVID-free.

Overall, there are both positives and negatives with returning back to in-person learning. The positives include the happiness students and teachers feel now that they can socialize face to face and the fact that students have more time to focus on school. The negatives of returning back to school in person relate to there being less free time and that we are at a higher risk for getting COVID. If anyone out there enjoys being back in school, always remember to keep your mask on, social distance and do not eat food in classrooms. Let's be smart so we can stay together.

Missing class deadlines is far too common for students

Avoiding the common excuses for not doing assignments can help students develop better habits for future success

From the Editors

You just got home and you put down your backpack. You sit down to watch your favorite TV show and, two hours later, you remember you have homework but continue watching TV instead. It is now 8:30 p.m. and you're tired, but you know you have to now cram in the few hours of homework you should've completed after school. Students struggle with deadlines for a variety of reasons. Choosing entertainment over homework, mental health and procrastination are three main issues that could make a student

hand in their work late.

Among the many reasons students may struggle with deadlines, having "better" things to do is a main one. Busy teenagers can get tired and prioritize relaxation in their downtime rather than picking up a textbook. Our generation is fixated on entertainment through social media on our electronics. It can be difficult to want to put down our phones and decide to commit a few hours of our time to homework. Other times, there are just more entertaining things to do.

Another reason for deadline struggles is, unfortunately, related to mental health. Having depression is

like having a shadow walking with you constantly throughout your day, bringing you down. You can get so low that you don't care about your responsibilities or getting good grades. It's hard to care about anything when you have depression; because of it, you hardly feel anything in general. People who struggle with depression can have a hard time even caring about themselves, whether it is getting out of bed in the morning to eating, so why would they care about meeting deadlines when late work is an option?

A third reason students struggle with meeting deadlines is procrastina-

tion. Students are excellent at spending their downtime indulging in entertainment and not having the energy to get their homework out of their backpacks. Due to this kind of procrastination, students may not meet deadlines because they have started their work too late.

Students struggle with deadlines for a variety of reasons. We are here to tell you from experience to try your best to pick up that backpack and get things done. If you manage your time wisely, you will not have to deal with the stressful homework spree of trying to get everything done at the last minute.



# Epic *Dune* benefits from big screen

Directed by Denis Villeneuve, *Dune* is a unique science fiction film based on the 1965 novel of the same name

By LUKE REKELA-JASPER  
Quill staff writer

*Dune: Part One*, directed by Denis Villeneuve, is an epic science fiction film based on a 1965 novel of the same name. As far as I know, this movie primarily covers the first quarter to half of the book. *Dune* is set in the far future of humanity and follows a gifted young man named Paul Atreides, whose family becomes involved in a war on the desert planet Arrakis over the “spice,” a priceless substance that can extend human life and is critical for interstellar travel. Basically, it is the best thing in the universe and everybody wants it.

I really didn’t have high hopes for this movie, other than the fact that I really liked Villeneuve’s previous two films, *Arrival* and *Blade Runner 2049*, so going into *Dune*, I was pretty confident that Villeneuve would at least deliver a movie I would like. While my thin expectations for *Dune* were mostly met, there were still a few criticisms I had once I left the movie theater.

One personal highlight of seeing the film was that, for the first time in almost two years, I saw *Dune* in a movie theater. Specifically, I saw it at the Heights Theater, which is an old fashioned movie theater in Columbia Heights. This is a theater I’d highly recommend.

With all that said, the first movie-related topic I’d like to discuss is *Dune*’s visuals, sound and music. I’d say for about 60-70 percent of the film, the cinematography was fantastic. But for the other 30-40 percent of the time, the setting would be in dark rooms or locations in which I could barely see the characters or what was going on. This problem got to the point where it was really distracting from the plot of the film. However, when rewatching some of these scenes on HBO Max, I found that I could see these darker scenes a lot more clearly, so while I would still recommend that everyone go out and see this movie in theaters, I think that, when it comes to visuals, this movie is more appealing on a computer or TV screen, which is not something I thought I would be saying about a Denis Villeneuve movie. At the same time, the sound and music of *Dune* was clearly meant for the big screen and to be blasted through a theater’s expensive speakers, so despite my issues with the darker



Photo courtesy of LEGENDARY PICTURES

The protagonist of the film is Paul Atreides, who may or may not be key to peace across the universe.

scenes, I think *Dune*’s sound, music and visuals are spectacular and on par with Villeneuve’s previous movies.

The second topic I’d like to discuss is the plot and story of *Dune*. I’ll just say it like it is right away: non-*Dune* fans will not know what is going on in this movie. I knew a little bit about the lore and mythology of the *Dune* universe going into the theater, but almost right away, I could tell that this movie was made for the die-hard fans of this story. Villeneuve does a pretty decent job of explaining what the most important things are to the narrative, such as what spice is, the background behind House Atreides, the importance of an organization called the Bene Gesserit, why the main protagonist, Paul Atreides, is such a gifted young man, and so on. But as for the narrative as a whole, the best way I could describe it would be that it’s like doing a 1,000-piece puzzle. It can be really slow and even boring at times, but when you finally figure out what is going on, it’s a relief. At the same time, once I realized that I figured out what was going on in a scene, that also made me realize that I previously had no idea what was happening in the scene, which only further added to my confusion.

As for the story, the plot revolves around two clashing houses, House Atreides and House Harkonnen, fighting for control over the desert planet Arrakis, which is the source of the most valuable resource in the uni-

verse: spice. This movie is also a character drama about the heir to House Atreides, Paul Atreides, who begins his journey into ruling Arrakis and overseeing the production of the spice. Without spoiling anything, I found that the story was the most underwhelming aspect to *Dune*. It may be that I am just interested in different types of stories, but I really just didn’t vibe with *Dune*’s complex narrative. It also didn’t help that this is (and feels) like the first part of a bigger storyline. This movie is kind of like *The Lord of the Rings*, but in space, though I think *The Fellowship of the Ring* is a better story because of how simple it is. *Dune*’s story is very complicated since there is so much going on at once, while in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the plot is pretty simple: the boys have to go and destroy a ring to save the world. Boom. However, I think the fans who are in tune with the *Dune* universe will love this movie for its narrative since they understand and care about the mythology and its conflicts. Since I probably know a fraction of what those people know about the “*Dune*-iverse,” I just couldn’t get on board with it all.

As for the characters in *Dune*, I thought the ensemble cast gave these mostly stoic and strictly written characters a lot of humanity and depth. In particular, Timothée Chalamet, who plays Paul Atreides, gave an excellent performance, mainly because he perfectly captures the eagerness Paul has to finally

ascend into adulthood, while still exhibiting the traits that a young and inexperienced man needs to have in the beginning of his big and epic story. Rebecca Ferguson, who plays Paul’s mother, Lady Jessica, and Oscar Isaac, who plays Paul’s father, Duke Leto I, also give their A-games. They were both believable as parental and political role models for Paul.

As for the secondary characters, I thought Jason Momoa’s character, Duncan Idaho, provided the most humanity out of the cast, but primarily because he was just acting like himself, Jason Momoa, the entire time. Stellan Skarsgård and Dave Bautista play the main antagonists of the film: Baron Vladimir Harkonnen and his nephew Rabban. I thought they were good for what they got, but they didn’t really do all that much, other than talk in dark rooms about space politics. I’m hoping that the villains really get to be involved in some of the action in the sequel because I think it will make their characters a lot more memorable and will uplift their performances.

Overall, *Dune* was confusing at times, but it is a well-directed, well-performed and, for the most part, well-executed film. I give *Dune* four out of five stars. It’s a good film that was obviously made for fans of this media and I am excited for the now officially greenlit sequel, *Dune: Part Two*, which Warner Bros. has scheduled to be released in theaters on October 20, 2023.

## Excellent *Rose* will fully bloom for fantasy fans

*A Court of Thorns and Roses* is loosely based on *Beauty and the Beast*

By TAJANNEA JENKINS  
Quill staff writer

*A Court of Thorns and Roses* is a young adult novel by Sarah J. Maas that was originally published by Bloomsbury Publishing in May 2015. The novel is based off of the story *Beauty and the Beast*. In my opinion, *A Court of Thorns and Roses* has amazing character development, which makes it hard to put the book down.

*A Court of Thorns and Roses* is about a young girl named Freye, who has to hunt to be able to feed her family. They live in a poor village outside of a wall that was built by the Fae, a group that hasn’t been heard from in 500 years. When she’s hunting one day, Freye kills a deer she sees in the woods, which happens to be a Fae. This death causes a Fae to cross over the wall, which jumpstarts a prophecy neither one has control over.

*A Court of Thorns and Roses* has many great things about it, but for me, the most important is the design of the characters. One excellent character in particular is Freye. Her complexity and propensity for being difficult are what makes her my favorite character in the book. Although she is human, a group that is viewed as weak next to the Fae, Freye develops her own type of strength throughout the book. Ultimately, this character teaches the lesson that it’s not all about physical strength; instead, emotional strength is also important.

Another thing that draws me to this novel is how these well-constructed characters are developed throughout the book and the eventually follow-up books. We see in the novel that all of the characters change, sometimes for better and sometimes for worse. For example, Freye is afraid of the Fae and all they represent until she falls in love with a High Fae. The way Freye responds to this connects to another strength of the character development: characters in the novel change in how they view themselves and the other people around them. As the novel goes on, so does each character’s appreciation for and acknowledgment of the others.

Overall, *A Court of Thorns and Roses* is a novel that has a good combination of romance and action. In fact, of all of the books I have heard of that attempted to merge those two genres, this one is the best. It is a quotable novel that you won’t be able to get out of your mind until you have completely read it, and even then, you will want more. This book shows readers that everything is more than it seems if you just look hard enough. *A Court of Thorns and Roses* deserves five out of five stars.

## EATING LUNCH

continued from page 1

One upperclassman who has made use of the alternative eating spots is Gabriel Villa Tavez (12).

“The outside commons has more space and is a lot less crowded than the cafeteria,” he said.

When it comes to the commons area near the downstairs community gym, he said that “adding more seats” would make it more comfortable, although he recognized that “they seem to have put as many in there as possible” already.

While seniors, juniors and sophomores have the flexibility to eat lunch in these different locations, freshmen must stay in the cafeteria. Andrew Brooks (9) said he does not mind being in the cafeteria since he is “able to talk to [his] friends.” At the same time, Brooks noted that the cafeteria is home to a lot of “noise and chaos.” As a result, he said he believes that younger students should get open lunch privileges.

“We have nowhere to go and nothing else to do,” Brooks said.

# Music lovers will enjoy crossing Wiley's *Thin Ice*

Wiley's famous 2004 release is widely viewed as the most prominent example of the music genre known as "grime"

By PHILIP ROBERT  
Quill staff writer

*Tredden’ on Thin Ice* is the debut album from Wiley. Originally released in 2004, *Tredden’ on Thin Ice* is one of many grime releases to come out in the early 2000s. The grime scene featured many artists from the east side of London, including people like Dizzee Rascal and Kano. In fact, *Tredden’ on Thin Ice* is held up as being one of grime’s foundational albums. For anyone interested in good music in general and grime in particular, *Tredden’ on Thin Ice* is a great album to check out.

To talk about this album, we need to start by taking it back in time. Before *Tredden’ on Thin Ice* came out, Wiley was experiencing a lot of success selling his vinyl on the road. For example, “Eskimo,” one of the interludes of the album, sold 100,000 copies. He also was doing a lot of pirate radio broadcasts through illegal radio stations in England. Additionally, he would go on Rinse FM and Deja Vu FM to perform his bars before they went on the album.

Wiley started working on *Tredden’ on Thin Ice* at the same time Dizzee Rascal started his album, 2003’s *Boy in da Corner*. Wiley was in the studio for days working with rappers from different groups like



Photo courtesy of INTERSCOPE RECORDS

Wiley remains a controversial figure in the British music scene.

Nasty Crew and Ruff Squad. The songs Wiley was putting together reflected east London life back in the 2000s.

Americans think Londoners are polite people who say “Cheerio” all the time, but Wiley and the grime scene showed that the UK can be ghetto. The album is seen as a critical success in grime music with an enduring and influential forward-facing sound. Wiley made the album for the kids in the street and for garage heads, which is a style of music like house music but faster. Ultimately, through this album, Wi-

ley wanted to teach life lessons and music industry lessons.

This brings us to the actual tracks on the album. A personal favorite is “The Game,” which is about Wiley’s experiences as he helped start the grime scene and dealt with his subsequent fame. Another song dealing with Wiley’s experience with music is “Wot U Call It.” This song is about people not knowing about what to call his genre of music. While it would eventually be called grime, Wiley described his sound as “Eskibeat,” a term that goes with his secondary

stage name, “Eskiboy.”

While these are more personal songs, the album deals with larger issues as well. For example, “The Garage” deals with social issues. In this song, he addresses the crime that was happening around him at the time he made the album. Meanwhile, “Pick Ur Self Up” is about people not working hard enough. Wiley is trying to tell listeners to move forward by putting in the necessary work.

As these four songs show, *Tredden’ on Thin Ice* is a rollercoaster ride. Wiley is clearly trying to have variety on his album, from fun tracks about eating pies to tracks about deep subjects like being isolated. The variety can also be heard in the music itself, which features a lot of sounds that the grime scene made popular in the early 2000s. In fact, many of these sounds would eventually find their way into the more mainstream, popular music that producers like Timbaland were making.

Thanks to Wiley’s work on *Tredden’ on Thin Ice*, the grime scene made its mark. In fact, the true impact of Wiley and this scene would not be realized until much later. Even if the album sometimes gets repetitive, its original sounds and lyrics are still relevant, which is why this album deserves five out of five stars.



## Family drama *Fosters* hits all the right notes

The five-season series, which first ran on ABC Family, is worth binge watching



Photo courtesy of ABC FAMILY

One theme *The Fosters* continually returns to is that family consists of more than just biology.

By TAJANNEA JENKINS  
Quill staff writer

*The Fosters* is a five-season drama directed by Peter Paige and Bradley Bredeweg. The show originally aired beginning in 2013 on ABC Family. In my opinion, *The Fosters* has amazing character development, a good focus on real-life issues and teen problems, and an interesting take on its exploration of the “found family” trope.

*The Fosters* is a teen drama about a couple, Steff and Lena Foster, who have a close family with Steff’s biological son, Brandon, and their adopted twins, Mariana and Jesus. When Lena meets Callie, a tough foster child in juvie, she automatically takes her into the home, thinking it will be temporary. However, Callie’s decisions and how her life has been make the Fosters second-guess the idea of this arrangement only being temporary.

One aspect of *The Fosters* that makes it an incredible TV show is the acting. The emotion that’s put into the acting is what makes it special. Each performer is great at making their character seem real, which makes the show more emotional overall. For example, there is a moving scene during which Callie speaks about her life and how hard it has been. This moment doesn’t seem like it’s fake. The viewer can really tell the character is in pain.

Another great aspect of *The Fosters* is the music. In the show, music plays an important factor in showing the bonds between characters and the feelings they are experiencing. This helps the viewer understand the characters and the show as a whole. For example, the theme song for the show is called “Where You Belong.” Thanks to the lyrics of this song, one can interpret that the show as a whole wants to talk about family, fostering and adoption.

*The Fosters* is a great example of the “found family” trope in storytelling. In my opinion, the show captures it perfectly. The show has a slow build as these people change from being strangers to friends to family. Eventually, they are willing to do whatever they need to do for each other. While *The Fosters* is heavily based on the idea of family, it is not necessarily a biological family that they are advocating. Instead, the show demonstrates that a real family is the family you make.

*The Fosters* is a show that can open one’s eyes to the different ways families can come about and the different ways they are formed. It is an emotional drama that addresses real-life issues expertly. In my opinion, *The Fosters* is a show everyone should watch. It’s the good kind of an emotional show where you never know what to expect. It can be sad, honest and truthful about conversations we are all afraid to talk about, which to me is the beauty of this show. Overall, it deserves five out five stars.

## *Suicide Squad* sequel surpasses original film

*Guardians of the Galaxy* helmer James Gunn injects the new movie with his trademark humor and excessive gore

By LUKE REKELA-JASPER  
Quill staff writer

*The Suicide Squad* was written and directed by James Gunn. The film is a sequel/soft reboot to 2016’s *Suicide Squad* and it counts as the tenth installment in the DC Extended Universe. In the film, a government-created task force dubbed the “Suicide Squad” is sent to a South American island nation to destroy a Nazi-era laboratory that holds a secretive government experiment.

Before *The Suicide Squad* was released in theaters and on HBO Max on August 5, I expected this to be just a standard, modern-day comic book film with a blend of CGI action sequences, witty and humorous characters, and a lot of comedy. I didn’t anticipate it to be a bad movie, being that the writer and director, James Gunn, had made two good Marvel superhero flicks, *Guardians of the Galaxy* and *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*. So when I sat down after a hard day’s work to watch this standalone sequel/soft reboot to the cinematic “masterpiece” that was 2016’s *Suicide Squad*, I wasn’t at all surprised that I got pretty much what I expected.

The first topic I’ll be discussing is the characters. The main members of the Suicide Squad, Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie), Bloodsport (Idris Elba), King Shark (Sylvester Stallone), Polka-Dot Man (David Dastmalchian), Ratcatcher 2 (Daniela Melchior), Peacemaker (John Cena) and Colonel Rick Flag (Joel Kinnaman), all do a pretty good job with their performances. My only criticisms are with how these characters are written. Without spoiling any plot points, the most disappointing character to me was Rick Flag, who was not great in *Suicide Squad*, but whose character arc in this film takes an unexpected turn that I just didn’t vibe with. In contrast, I think the standout character is Ratcatcher 2, who felt like the heart of the team. She also had



Photo courtesy of DC FILMS

James Gunn’s skill at giving each member of a large, ensemble cast a chance to shine is largely successful in *Squad*.

a very interesting and surprisingly tragic backstory featuring Taika Waititi, so that was a nice bonus.

While I think the main members of the Suicide Squad get their well-deserved recognition, I felt the secondary ensemble of Squad members did not get enough time to shine. I understand why they weren’t used very much, which was so the film could give more limelight to the main cast, but when comedians and actors like Pete Davidson, Nathan Fillion and Michael Rooker are cast in pretty interesting and entertaining parts, it made me want to see them get into some of the mischief that the main cast was getting into. Overall, I think the focus on a smaller group of characters was for the best, since too many characters would have just made the plot too complex, so I think Gunn made the right call there.

Characters aside, James Gunn has once again pushed the limits in regards to how creative comic

book movies can be. Gunn wisely takes advantage of the wacky superpowers and abilities that some of the Suicide Squad members have, which he incorporates into the majority of his action setpieces. I also loved how Gunn used transitions, often using objects or even body parts that had been exploded into oblivion to spell out letters that explain the setting. You could say that James Gunn went “guns blazing” with creativity in *The Suicide Squad*.

As for the story and without getting into spoilers, I appreciate the simplicity of the plot, but my main problem is that, by the third act, the members of the Suicide Squad decide to all of a sudden become “superheroes,” even when they have not really changed or gone through a heroic journey to properly define themselves as heroes. To me, it felt like the filmmakers wanted to end the film with the Suicide Squad fighting a giant alien starfish, so they just decided

to have the Suicide Squad, the bad guys, decide to risk their lives to destroy it, purely because “it’s the right thing to do.” Despite my issues with the third act, I think the pacing of the first and second acts flow quite well since the plot is primarily building and moving from place to place.

As for my final thoughts on *The Suicide Squad*, I think the main cast of characters carry this movie, accompanied by the oddities of James Gunn, but the film fails to properly develop all of these characters over the course of its running time. What is more, even if the third act isn’t exactly what a bland superhero movie usually does nowadays, it lacks the proper motivation, which could have created a more of an emotional final act for the film. I give *The Suicide Squad* 3.5 out of five stars. However, I am excited for Gunn’s next DC project, the TV series *Peacemaker*, which will be released onto HBO Max on January 13, 2022.

## New release from NBA YoungBoy is a triumph

Despite his current incarceration, NBA YoungBoy is still dropping music that is definitely worth hearing

By KEN WARD  
Quill staff writer

One of the largest faces of the rap industry right now goes by the name of NBA YoungBoy. Born Kentrell DeSean Gaulden on October 20, 1999, and raised in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, NBA YoungBoy’s newest album is called *Sincerely, Kentrell*, and it was released on September 24, 2021. The reason why I like this new project he dropped is because of the challenges he faced in making it. He has actually been in jail on federal criminal charges this year, so his label put the songs together and still dropped the album for him. Impressively, the album went to number one and was certified platinum on the first day it dropped. One reason for its success is that it is a great album with many excellent tracks.

To appreciate his new album, it helps to know a bit about NBA YoungBoy’s musical journey up until this point. He first started getting noticed for his skills in 2015, but a six-month prison sentence stopped him from immediately growing his fame. Once he was finally released from prison in 2017, he started releasing mixtapes, EPs and singles, many of which reached the Billboard charts.



Photo courtesy of ATLANTIC RECORDS

NBA YoungBoy’s new album was certified platinum on its first day of release.

Based on the success of these releases, NBA YoungBoy issued his debut album, *Until Death Call My Name*, in 2018. This album eventually hit the top 10 of the Billboard 200, while his follow-up mixtape, *AI YoungBoy 2*, reached number one on the chart when it was released in 2019.

In 2020, NBA YoungBoy put out multiple mixtapes leading up to the release of his second album, *Top*, which went to number one. Near the end of 2020, he came out with yet another mixtape and did a collaboration release with Rich the Kid called *Nobody Safe*.

The 2021 release of *Sincerely, Kentrell* demonstrates that NBA

YoungBoy has developed as an artist over the six years since he first got started. One of the best songs on the new project is “Life Support.” On this song, he is speaking about his pain. Additionally, he addresses the personal issues that are going on with him right now. Although the lyrics are personal, people can still relate to them. Also, it is a very catchy song.

A second standout song on *Sincerely, Kentrell* is “Hold Me Down.” One reason I really like this track is because it features one of the greatest flows I have heard from NBA YoungBoy. While it still sounds like his previous

songs, there is a unique quality to it that shows NBA YoungBoy is progressing as a rapper.

One of the more unique songs on the album is “Still Waiting.” While it is considered one of the bonus tracks on the album, it is as good as any of the main tracks. This song features NBA YoungBoy performing his vocals while on the phone during his current jail sentence. While the way in which the song was recorded was cool, it is also just a great song.

A final song I really enjoy on this album is “Nevada.” This is an NBA YoungBoy song that was actually recorded in the past and blew up with listeners a long time ago, but it had never gotten an official release. NBA YoungBoy’s decision to put this song on his newest album was a good one given how much fans enjoy this track.

Overall, I feel like people should listen to *Sincerely, Kentrell*. Although NBA YoungBoy is in jail right now, this album gives listeners a chance to enjoy his music while we are waiting for him to get released so he can record again. The tracks on the album are a great way to know what this artist has been through. Also, the album has some songs that you can be lit to with your friends. Overall, *Sincerely, Kentrell* is a five-star album and one of the greatest projects NBA YoungBoy has dropped.

## NEW COOPER NHS OFFICERS ELECTED IN OCTOBER continued from page 2

Cooper NHS chapter in a manner that promotes the four pillars and produces positive change in [the] community.”

Through community service, Tran hopes to “make a large impact on the school.” Likewise, Bipes “hopes to achieve a good year of service to the community.” Additionally, Rincon Hernandez and Mulat said they hope to support the rest of the NHS members the best they can and improve

their leadership skills.

As this school year continues, each officer looks forward to participating in the volunteering events. They also encourage other students to join NHS.

“I would encourage students to join as they’ll be able to participate in countless volunteering events and be with a like-minded group of students that enjoy helping around,” Tran said.

According to Bipes, another reason to join relates to networking.

“Students should join NHS because it allows you to establish a connective network of peers, many of whom are also looking to elevate their academics along with their community engagement,” Bipes said.

For her part, Rincon Hernandez encourages students to join NHS “because it is something that is going to

benefit others and yourself.”

“It benefits you in the aspect that it will make you feel good about yourself and it will look good on your resume,” she said.

Mulat also encourages students to join NHS.

“It is a great way to give back to your community and an honor since you are able to keep up your grades,” Mulat said.



# Leaf is best in *Animal Crossing* series

The game, which is nearly a decade old, still satisfies players looking for a relaxing experience driven by interesting characters

By CECELIA NICHOLS  
Quill staff writer

The *Animal Crossing* series is one beloved by many and it has had a devoted following ever since the first game, which was simply called *Animal Crossing*. This game was released in North America on September 15, 2002 for the Gamecube. Since then, the series has had a few sequels. The first was *Animal Crossing: Wild World* on the Nintendo DS, which was released in North America on December 5, 2005. This was followed by *Animal Crossing: City Folk* for the Nintendo Wii, released on November 16, 2008. This brings us to the game I will be focusing on: *Animal Crossing: New Leaf*, which was released in North America on the Nintendo 3DS on June 9, 2013. I believe *Animal Crossing: New Leaf* is good for anyone who would like to play a relaxing game they can pick up from time to time and enjoy.

*Animal Crossing: New Leaf* doesn't necessarily have a story, or at least a very in-depth one. The game starts with the player meeting Rover on a train. This is also when the player chooses the map for their town, their town's name, the gender of their character, and how their character looks by answering questions Rover asks you. For this, I'd recommend a guide if you want your character to look a certain way.

After this sequence, you arrive in your town. You're greeted by Isabelle, your secretary, and some of your town's villagers, which are chosen at random. Here, you're told that you are the town's new mayor, which is a surprise to the player character. From there, you go with Isabelle to the town hall, where she directs you to go to Nook's Homes on main street. Once you meet Tom Nook, you lead him to the place you want your house to be. Tom Nook sets up a tent and mailbox for your new living space.

After this, you go back to town hall to give Isabelle your birthdate for your town pass card. This is essentially an ID card for your character.

Finally, you participate in the tree planting ceremony to cel-



Photo courtesy of NINTENDO

*Animal Crossing: New Leaf* was first released in North America on the Nintendo 3DS on June 9, 2013.

brate becoming mayor. This tree will grow as you continue to play the game. But from here, you're let loose to naturally progress through the game.

*New Leaf* keeps the core mechanics from the game's previous installments, such as hanging out with the town's villagers, going fishing and bug hunting, decorating your house and more. However, *New Leaf* also manages to add even more things to do.

For example, there are 72 fish and bugs to catch, which is up from 60 in the previous game. On top of this are the 30 sea creatures the player can catch while diving in the ocean.

*New Leaf* also adds the ability to change the exterior of your house. This can be anything from making a candy house to a large castle.

Moreover, there is the addition of Main Street and the retail store. Main Street is where all the big stores and businesses are located, including a museum where you can donate the things you catch along with paintings. The retail store is where you can sell your goods and put stuff up for other people to buy. You can also have certain items personal-

ized here by Reese. These personalizations can be something like changing the color of something or the material it's made from. This is just a small taste of all the amazing things that are available to do in this area of the game.

Another addition is Tortimer Island, a place where Kapp'n can take up to four players to the island on his motorboat, 1000 Bells, for a round trip. This location is accessible to Wi-Fi visitors. Upon arrival, the player will enter the tour office, which is run by Kapp'n's family.

Leilani handles the tours, which are minigames hosted by Tortimer that can have for up to four players. Tours can be played with friends who are on the island or with random players via online matchmaking. They take place in various other towns and on surrounding islands. Medals are awarded based on every player's performance during the tour and are used as currency on Tortimer Island. Playing tours is probably the best thing about the island. It's a great way to compete with friends in fun, easy-to-understand games.

It is always summer on Tortimer Island, with summer fish

and insects available along with several unique species. The trees on the island bear exotic fruits that cannot be found on the mainland. Lloid is located outside of the shack and will rent out tools and wetsuits for use on the island. A beach surrounds the island and players wearing the wet suit can swim in the water and dive for deep-sea creatures. This makes it easier to get some of the fish, bugs and deep-sea creatures that are only available in the summer. It's also an easy way to make money; the beetles on the island can sell for thousands of bells. Also, the player can bring back fruit to plant on their own beach.

Your mayoral duties in *New Leaf* add a great deal of creativity to the game. As mayor, you can customize your town by creating public works projects. The projects can be something like a bench, a fountain or even a coffee shop called The Roost. These projects are how you unlock some of the buildings in Main Street, so it's important to get the bells needed in order to do them.

As mayor, you can place or-

**LEAF IS BEST**  
continues on page 8

# Gamers become samurai warriors in great *Ghost*

*Ghost of Tsushima* features excellent graphics and a compelling story



Photo courtesy of SONY INTERACTIVE

The game follows the story of samurai Jin Sakai as he fights against a Mongol invasion.

By DEVIN GRAY  
Quill staff writer

*Ghost of Tsushima*, developed by Sucker Punch Productions, was released July 17, 2020. I chose this game to review because it has a great story and challenging gameplay. I believe people who are looking for a challenging game should play *Ghost*. I believe that *Ghost of Tsushima* is an excellent game because it has top-tier graphics and gameplay that can get any player lost for hours.

*Ghost of Tsushima* takes place on the island of Tsushima, Japan during the Mongol invasion. The game follows the story of samurai Jin Sakai as he fights against the Mongol invasion in the 13th century. However, the main moral codes of the samurai just aren't working against this invasion, which means the hero might need to go against his code in order to save his country.

One memorable thing about *Ghost* is the beautiful graphics and environment on the island of Tsushima. The inclusion of many different weather conditions and a wide assortment of wildlife running around this vast, detailed island makes the game especially immersive. You can notice small things like Jin placing his hands in the fields as he walks by. Details such as this underscore how impressive the graphics are in *Ghost of Tsushima*.

In the game, Jin has to fight most of the Mongol army by himself, which is no easy task. Even when placed on normal difficulty, the enemies can sometimes get the one-up on Jin. However, for players who are experienced in the genre of action role-playing games and need a challenge, lethal mode is the way to go. In this setting, one sword strike can destroy the entire health bar if done correctly by the dirty-playing Mongols. A fair fight never happens when dealing with them, especially because they always congregate in groups of 5-30, making battles difficult.

The story for *Ghost* is far from shallow, as it deals with the struggles Jin faces in light of his moral code. Jin wants to stick to the ways of the samurai, which require one to fight head on and with honor. However, the Mongols don't play fair, so the samurai tactics do not work as they should. In order to save his island, Jin teams up with a bandit named Yuna, who sneaks and fights in ways similar to those of the Mongols. While the side missions don't necessarily involve the main story, they all have storylines that are worth looking into that take up a good chunk of playing time. Ultimately, *Ghost* is really good at getting the player to invest in these miniscule situations.

As much as I would like to tell you about the game, it's better if you play it yourself. Whether you are looking for open-world travel and exploration, or simply for a good story, *Ghost of Tsushima* is a well-rounded game that a wide audience can enjoy. I give this game four out of five stars.

# Rise brings depth to *Planet of the Apes* franchise

The first installment in the *Apes* reboot trilogy addresses compelling themes through great performances

By KEN WARD  
Quill staff writer

*Planet of the Apes* was a 1963 book written by Pierre Boulle that was later adapted into the 1968 movie, *Planet of the Apes*. This film became the basis of a franchise that has now been going on for more than half a century.

The *Apes* story has gone through many different iterations throughout the years and has given fans a multitude of movies to enjoy. There were five movies spinning off of the original 1968 film *Planet of the Apes*. There was then a stand-alone film in 2001 directed by Tim Burton. More recently, there were three *Apes* movies, the last of which was released in 2017 and directed by Matt Reeves. The overall story for all of these movies is fairly similar from movie to movie, but each movie brings its own new twist to the franchise. My favorite of this batch of movies is 2011's *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*.

One highlight of the film is the way it develops the characters. Perhaps the most important character is Caesar, who is played by Andy Serkis. Caesar is the leader of the ape army. Caesar had been exposed to a gas that makes the apes' brains more intelligent, which helped him develop the ability to learn English. Caesar felt the need to pass all the gas out at an ape facility to develop the



Photo courtesy of 20TH CENTURY FOX

Andy Serkis' portrayal of Caesar is the heart of the 2011 film.

intelligence of the other apes as well. Caesar then had all the apes get out of their cages and lined them up every day to learn sign language and how to speak, something that his owner taught him when he was little. These actions show that Caesar is our protagonist and it develops the idea for the audience that these apes are being mistreated by humans.

This theme of mistreatment can be seen in one particular sequence that also shows how good the performance of Serkis is, not to mention the excellent CGI effects that bring Caesar to life in the movie. The scene begins when Caesar one day decides to stay in the playground area while the other apes are told to get back in their cages. When Caesar starts to get shocked with a tas-

er by one of the guards, Caesar grabs the guard's arm and overpowers him. Caesar then rises up and says "Nooooo" to the guard's face. In that moment, all the apes know he is the leader because he just did the impossible. Thanks to the excellent acting and effects work, Caesar's movements and facial expressions during this scene look believable, which makes it easier for the viewer to connect with the character.

Another highlight of the film is its settings and action sequences. After escaping, Caesar roams around the city with his ape army and goes to where he was born, which is a biotech company where they had killed his mother. He and the ape army not only destroy that place, but also destroy the whole city of San Francisco

and the Golden Gate Bridge. The action in these sequences is epic and well directed, and the San Francisco settings look accurate and real, which helps the audience engage in the film.

One element I find interesting in the film is that the viewer roots for the apes instead of the humans. Caesar is a hero because his intelligence allows him to free all the apes from the ape facility and the biotech company, which carries a subtle message about the ways in which humans often imprison animals and other humans without good reasons. Caesar knows that other apes are his true family, not his original owner, to whom he was just a pet. The obstacles in Caesar's life made him start to look at the world differently. He wants all of his kind to survive and to never go back to being just caged animals that the guards are abusing. Caesar stays with his kind and never looks back, which is an uplifting message to the film's viewers.

Overall, I highly recommend *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* due to its compelling depiction of Caesar. Thanks to Andy Serkis' performance, the use of CGI to translate that performance to the screen, and the many themes that are connected to that central character, Caesar is the heart of the movie. *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* earns five out of five stars.



# Premier Performers

The story of the musicians and artists who bring their talents to Cooper

## Jamese Decker

By PHILIP ROBERT  
Quill staff writer

Jamese Decker (12) is involved with the Concert Choir, Bella Voce and Chamber Singers music groups. She started choir in her freshman year, but when the pandemic hit, she quit because she said she “didn’t like singing on Google Meet.” However, when things got better this school year, she rejoined the choir groups.

“I started choir because I really like singing and I enjoy learning new techniques and how to use my voice,” she said.

Decker also enjoys the community and how much the teachers care about the singers.

“I didn’t eat lunch one day and Ms. Rowan offered me a granola bar. She is the main reason I came back. She makes me feel like I belong and I’m wanted,”



Photo by R. BULLOCK

she said.

Decker said her favorite choir memory is from the fall festival in ninth grade when she got lost looking for a restaurant.

“My friends and I got lost looking for Panera in downtown Minneapolis,” she said.

This year, Decker is the choir photographer. Additionally, she said she will apply to be a choir assistant.

Outside of choir, Decker’s favorite subject is forensics.

“This may sound dark, but I like learning about gruesome ways people die,” she said.

Next fall, Decker’s plan is to attend college to become a preschool teacher.

“I’m not sure what college I want to attend yet, [but] I want to continue with choir. It’s really fun and you can get scholarships for it,” she said.

## Mel Albrecht Ribeiro

By SHENG VANG  
Quill staff writer

Mel Albrecht Ribeiro (12) is a foreign exchange student who is involved in Cooper choir and the Cooper art class Design in Clay.

“I started this year because I didn’t have these classes in Brazil,” Albrecht Ribeiro said. “I thought it would be really fun to do something completely new.”

Since Albrecht Ribeiro has only been in these activities this year, she said she “does not have a lot of good memories yet.” However, she “enjoyed listening to the vocal harmonies” in choir class as she thinks “it’s really beautiful.”

As for her Design in Clay class, Albrecht Ribeiro really enjoyed “having the possibility of making real pottery” by



Photo by R. BULLOCK

herself and is excited to build her mug.

Although Albrecht Ribeiro does not take part in any leadership roles in these activities, she is going to continue choir for the remaining school year.

Albrecht Ribeiro mentioned some of her favorite classes in school are Film Study and Design in Clay. She thinks it is “awesome to know what is behind a film production” and finds Design in Clay interesting as it was something that she had never done before.

Outside of school, Albrecht Ribeiro likes to sing and play the ukulele. She also enjoys watching TV shows and movies and hanging out with her friends and family.

After graduation, Albrecht Ribeiro plans to “study psychology in a Brazilian university.” She said she will probably continue with her art-related activities after high school, but only as a hobby.

## Clare LaMothe

By DAMARIUS HAMILTON  
Quill staff writer

Clare LaMothe (12) is involved with band. She first started band in fifth grade at Forest Elementary as a trumpet player, the same instrument her father played during his childhood.

“I thought I should continue that new tradition of being a band geek,” she said.

While the music itself has been a highlight of LaMothe’s time in band, her fellow musicians also keep her enjoying the activity.

“I truly enjoy learning from my peers of seniors to my underclassmen about music and what that means to them,” she said.

LaMothe’s trumpet talents have inspired her to take part in the Hawks marching band. She said playing at football games has been a favorite memory



Photo by R. BULLOCK

as a musician. Once the football season is over, LaMothe will take part in pep band for the basketball season. In addition, she said she will start Jazz I, which is a “higher-level jazz band group that you can join through auditions.”

When she is not playing trumpet, LaMothe said she enjoys hanging out with friends, watching shows, reading books and spending time with her pets.

“A hobby I like to do with friends is walk around an area as a way to have fun. One time, my friend came over to my house at 6 a.m. on a Saturday morning, just so we could walk around all day,” she said.

Next fall, LaMothe is planning to study psychology at college.

“I know what field I want to study in, but not the specific job title,” she said. “What I do know is that I want to work hard to become a worthy therapist.”

## Sugie Yang

By RICHARA BULLOCK  
Quill staff writer

Sugie Yang (12) is a Cooper student who plays in the orchestra. He said he has been in orchestra for a long time.

“I have been doing orchestra for about eight years,” Yang said.

Of the many things Yang said he enjoys about orchestra, the music itself is key.

“I enjoy being able to play the music and also listening to the music,” he said.

The end goal of students in orchestra is performing the songs they have learned for an audience. Yang said the highlights of his years in music connect to this process.

“My favorite memories are usually from the concerts and showing everyone what we accomplished,”



Photo by R. BULLOCK

Yang said.

When it comes to school, Yang said he especially enjoys history as a subject.

“I like learning about the past because it fascinates me how different we were back then compared to now,” Yang said.

During his free time, Yang said he has several hobbies, one of which connects to his work in orchestra.

“I like to listen to music of any genre, as long as it fits my taste. I also watch anime, read manga, play video games and do a little fishing,” Yang said.

Next fall, Yang plans on going to college, although he is still deciding which school he will attend.

“I want to go for either something in the tech field or engineering field,” he said.

# Orchestra shines at Halloween show

After the cancellation of the 2020 performance, the annual Halloween concert returned this fall



Photo by MS. PFLAUM

Members of the orchestra put in extra rehearsals leading up to the October 26 concert in Cooper’s auditorium.

By RICHARA BULLOCK  
Quill staff writer

The Cooper orchestra held its annual Family Fun Halloween Concert on October 26 at 6 p.m. The return of the event was welcomed by orchestra director Ms. Pflaum and the student musicians after last year’s event was canceled due to COVID.

“It was very nice to be able to hold the event again this fall,” Pflaum said. “It is always a joyous event for the community. We had a good turnout and audience members and orchestra students alike were excited.”

In order to keep the event as safe as possible given the high COVID transmission rates still occurring in Minnesota, Pflaum said masks were required and the location of the concert was shifted compared to the past.

“We did make some modifications this year, including holding the performance in the auditorium, whereas it has been in the cafeteria in the past,” she said.

The concert is designed to appeal to families, especially those with younger kids. The event kicked off with treats, goodies and carnival games in the main foyer at 6 p.m. Included among the games was pumpkin bowling, a bean bag toss and a scavenger hunt, which was new this year.

“Orchestra student volunteers ran carnival games for kids who attend,” Pflaum said.

After the foyer activities wrapped up, the music started at 6:30 p.m.

“Orchestras performed primarily music that was recognizable by audience members and especially children,” Pflaum said. “Selections included *Star Wars*, *Scooby Doo*, *Ghostbusters*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*

and *Sleeping Beauty Waltz*.”

According to Pflaum, the logistics of holding a concert so early in the school year was challenging “because it takes a lot of set up and organization.” Additionally, students had to learn the music for the event relatively soon after the school year started. Orchestra member Sugie Yang (12) said he and his fellow musicians responded well to these challenges.

“We had to practice playing so we could sound perfect for the day of the concert and for everyone there who is listening to enjoy the music,” he said.

An additional aspect of the concert that students had to adapt to was combining differ-

ent orchestra groups that may have not had a lot of time to rehearse together.

“One of the challenges would be combining both Philharmonic Orchestra and Symphony Orchestra in a dress rehearsal right before the concert,” Van Nguyen (12) said. “Both orchestras have excelled in their own classroom rehearsals; however, we have never rehearsed together any time before the day of the concert. Therefore, it felt much different when performing in such a large group. Despite that, we wrapped up the evening performance like a champ.”

As seniors in the orchestra program, both Nguyen and Yang experienced a year without the annual concert and were both excited that the performance made its return in 2021.

“Being able to participate in person with my classmates and having an audience was very exciting and different,” Nguyen said. “Switching to online and not having the Halloween concert last year due to COVID was not the greatest feeling because the concert has been a yearly tradition. Now that we are back in person, there’s a sense of normalcy, even though we have to stick to COVID restrictions, and I am very grateful for it.”

Agreeing with Nguyen was Yang, who mentioned how much he enjoyed watching the young audience members have fun.

“Kids were going around and having fun by playing the games we set up and getting candy. The orchestra students had fun by helping the kids play the games. It’s also fun playing the music for everyone to enjoy at the end,” he said.

Of the main positive elements to putting on a concert like this, Pflaum noted that community engagement is perhaps the most important one.

“It is a wonderful way to reach community members and younger kids who do not always see and hear performances at Cooper,” Pflaum said. “We often have elementary and middle school orchestra students in the audience and it is fun for them to see what they can do once they are in high school. The community engagement and fun activities are just as important as the music is for this concert.”

Admission to the event was \$3. Proceeds were used as a fundraiser for Cooper’s orchestra program.

## LEAF IS BEST IN ANIMAL CROSSING SERIES continued from page 7

dinances as well. An ordinance affects the way a town operates and there can only be one active ordinance at a time. For example, there’s the “beautiful town” ordinance, which helps keep the town looking neat and tidy if you’re someone that wants their town to look nice. Another example is the “early bird town” ordinance, which causes villagers to wake up earlier and shops open earlier. If you’re more likely to play the game in the morning, this ordinance would be for you.

*New Leaf* was further expanded with the “welcome amiibo” update back in 2016. The new features with this update include the use of certain amiibo cards and figures, which can invite a villager to the player’s campground in their RV. Unless

they’re among the first four generations of *Animal Crossing* amiibo cards, they’ll simply appear in front of you.

The amiibo can be used with the Nintendo NFC reader-writer accessory. If you have a Nintendo XL, you can just place your amiibo on the bottom screen of the 3DS. You can also convince a villager to move into your town, which makes getting certain villagers in your town much easier. Amiibo figures invite special characters to your campground, such as Tom Nook and Isabelle. You can even use amiibo figures from other games to have unique characters based of their respective games in your campground. These include amiibo figures from *Splatoon* and *The Legend of Zelda*.

You also can get special items that you can’t get from anywhere else from these character’s RVs. When visiting an RV, you can buy the furniture inside it with MEOW coupons, which stands for “mutual exchange of wealth.” The coupons are gained by performing certain tasks given to you each day, such as picking and selling a certain number of fruit or catching a specific fish.

Overall, *Animal Crossing: New Leaf* is a game that is perfect for anyone who enjoys a game they can sink a lot of time into, but that they can also simply pick up from time to time. There is plenty to do to keep the player occupied and to keep them coming back for more. I give this game five out of five stars.



# MLB playoffs had great games

From the wild card games through the World Series, the baseball postseason was filled with highlights

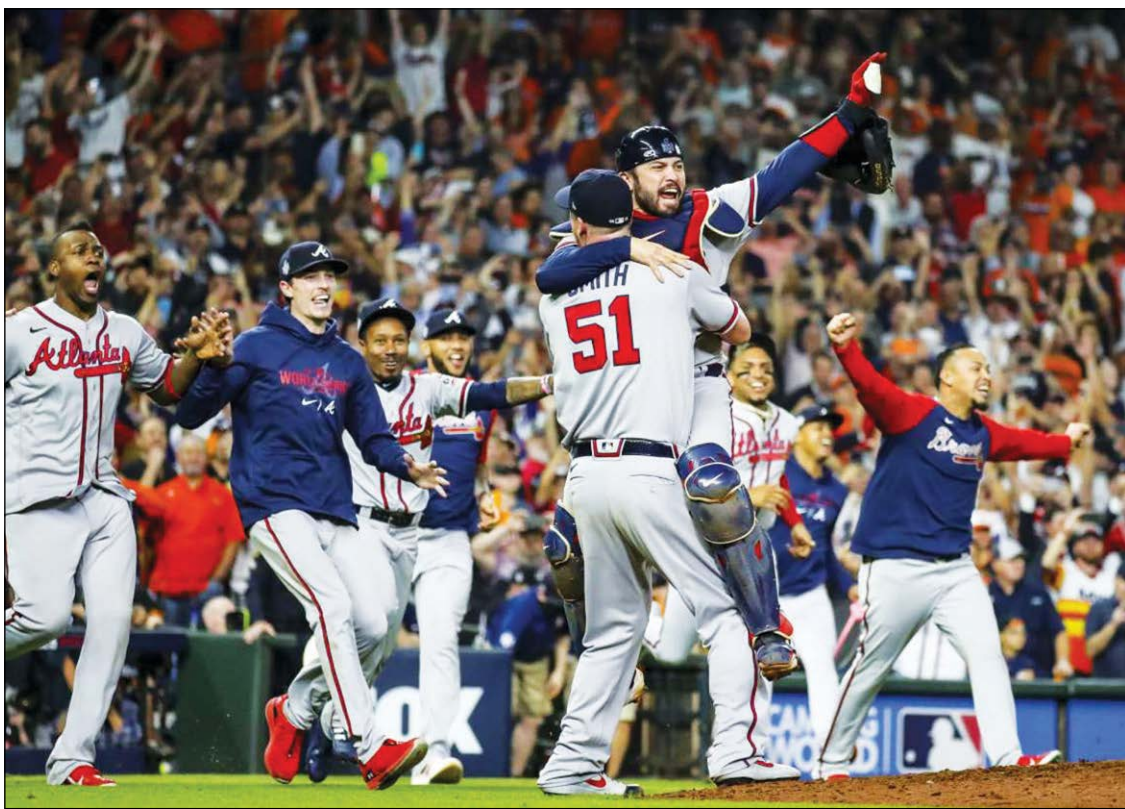


Photo courtesy of THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE

The Atlanta Braves were too much for the Houston Astros to handle during the 2021 World Series.

By NOLAN ANDLER  
Quill staff writer

This year's Major League Baseball season was truly one to remember. The league saw the return of fans, teams making magical runs, rivals dominating each other and compelling MVP and Cy Young races. This all carried over to the postseason, which was one for the ages.

The 2021 postseason started with two intriguing matchups in the wild card rounds. In the American League, storied rivals the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox squared off at Fenway, and in the National League, the red-hot St. Louis Cardinals took on the 100-win Los Angeles Dodgers in L.A. The Dodgers were only in this game because the team that won their division, the San Francisco Giants, had just one more win.

## AL Wild Card Game New York Yankees vs. Boston Red Sox

This game was hyped from the start and for good reason. New York. Boston. Wild card at Fenway. It couldn't get any better than this.

Unfortunately for the Yankees, the moment was too big. The Red Sox dominated in a 6-2 victory led by the arm of starting pitcher Nathan Eovaldi and their star hitters Kike Hernandez, Rafael Devers, Xander Bogaerts and Kyle Schwarber. The Bronx Bombers were no match. It also didn't help that their ace, Gerrit Cole, never got going.

## NL Wild Card Game St. Louis Cardinals vs. L.A. Dodgers

This one lived up to the hype. The red-hot Cardinals faced the 100-win Dodgers. It was a close game the whole way, but in the ninth inning, with the score tied 1-1, left fielder Chris Taylor hit a game-winning, two-run homer to send the Dodgers to the division playoff series.

## American League Division Series Chicago White Sox vs. Houston Astros

The divisional series kicked off with the AL Central champion Chicago and the AL West champion Houston facing each other. This series was all Houston. Led by pitcher Lance McCullers, Jr. and their number one offense, the Astros dominated both games at Houston before winning game four at Chicago 10-1, allowing them to advance to the championship series.

## Boston Red Sox vs. Tampa Bay Rays

AL East rivals Boston and division champion Tampa Bay squared off in the second ALDS series. The Rays, who came off

of the heartbreaking World Series loss last year, made a statement with a 100-win season and the number one AL seed. However, after the Red Sox were able to win game two at Tampa, it was game over as the series shifted to Boston and the Red Sox quickly closed out the series 3-1.

One moment of drama during the Red Sox win was a controversial call in game three when Rays centerfielder Kevin Kiermaier looked like he got the go-ahead hit to deep center, but the umpires called it a ground-rule double because the ball bounced off Boston centerfielder Kike Hernandez and into the stands. It proved costly because, during the next half-inning, Boston walked it off.

## National League Division Series Atlanta Braves vs. Milwaukee Brewers

This series featured the NL East and the NL Central champs the Braves and the Brewers. Hits were scarce in this series as it was a very pitching-heavy matchup, but when there were hits, they were clutch.

During game one, Rowdy Tellez hit what ended up being a game-winning, two-run homer

top two teams. It lived up to the hype.

After the first two games at San Fran, the series was tied going into L.A. The Giants won games one and three thanks to their pitching, which held the Dodgers' bats scoreless. Meanwhile, in games two and four, the Dodgers dominated the Giants' pitching, winning game two 9-2 and game four 7-2.

Game five was a classic, with both pitching staffs performing at lights-out levels. However, in the top of the ninth, Dodgers centerfielder Cody Bellinger found shades of his old self by driving home the go-ahead run with a single. Then, star pitcher Max Scherzer closed out the Giants' season in the bottom of the ninth, despite a controversial moment on the final strike when Giants first baseman Wilmer Flores was called on a checked swing strike when replays showed he clearly didn't go.

## American League Championship Series Boston Red Sox vs. Houston Astros

This series was all about swings. In game one, the Red Sox jumped out to a 3-1 lead, after which the Astros tied it up. Eventually, short stop Carlos Correa put the Astros ahead with a homer to win 5-4.

During game two, the Red Sox put it away early with two grand slams in the first two innings and a homer by centerfielder Kike Hernandez. The Astros later made a run, cutting the 9-0 deficit to 9-5, but it was too little too late and they lost.

With the series tied heading into Fenway for game three, the Red Sox exploded right out of the gate, going up 2-0 and, soon after, 6-0 thanks to a grand slam by Kyle Schwarber. The Red Sox ended up winning 12-3.

During game four, the Astros went up right away with a homer from Alex Bregman, after which the Red Sox responded with a two-run bomb from Xander Bogaerts. In the eighth inning, Jose Altuve tied it with a homer of his own, while in the ninth, after a controversial ball call, catcher Jason Castro broke it open, leading the Astros to a 9-2 win.

In game five, it was the Astros' show. Led by designated hitter Yordan Alvarez, the Astros took a 9-1 win and the series lead. Finally, game six was a pitching duel between Red Sox pitcher Nathan Eovaldi and the Astros' Luis Garcia. In the end, it was Luis Garcia and the Astros prevailing. Garcia pitched 5.2 innings, only allowing one hit. On the offensive side, it was Alvarez carrying the load. He went 4-4, earned two runs and batted in one. It was a close game at

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# Cooper Competitors

The story of the athletes who strive for success in Cooper sports

## Maddie Monner

By LLEWELLYN BOUTHIM  
Quill staff writer

Maddie Monner (12) swims during the fall season and plays lacrosse in the spring.

Monner has been swimming for seven years total, but she has been swimming for Cooper for five years. She said she joined swimming because she has loved being in the water and going to the pool since she was little.

Monner said there have been several things she has enjoyed during her time on the Hawks team.

"I really enjoyed when the team went to Grand Rapids and stayed in a cabin for the weekend," she said.

As for her favorite swimming memories, she said she enjoys when the taper part of the season comes around

"because the practices get harder but shorter and we end earlier."

The swim team has captains elected by the swimmers and coaches every year and she got the honor of being a captain of her team this year.

"The other three captains and I really enjoy bonding with the team and coming up with new, fun activities," she said.

In the spring, Monner played lacrosse for the first time last year.

"It was a change of pace from swimming year round and the team is so welcoming," she said.

When it comes to school, Monner said her favorite subjects are anatomy, yearbook and orchestra. In fact, anatomy is part of the field she is hoping to major in during college.

"I plan to go into an undergraduate program in physical therapy," she said.



Photo by R. BULLOCK

## LaMya Holmes

By LLEWELLYN BOUTHIM  
Quill staff writer

LaMya Holmes (12) plays volleyball all year round and, during the winter, she also trains to get ready for the upcoming seasons.

Holmes started playing volleyball eight years ago. She said she started by playing with other kids to learn the basics of the sport.

"I love doing team activities that have us closer together so on the court we dominate and do our best," she said.

According to Holmes, her relationships with her teammates are key to her love of volleyball.

"My favorite memories are the dinners I have with my team and going to other games to spend time with each other," she said.

Holmes is currently the captain of the team, a leadership role she has enjoyed.

"I've been part of varsity since my sophomore year and being able to finally lead the team feels like a big accomplishment," she said.

During the school day, Holmes' favorite classes are anatomy and yearbook. She said she enjoys anatomy because she gets to learn about the human body. Meanwhile, she is into yearbook because she likes to design different things and show off her creativity.

Outside of school and sports, Holmes has many hobbies.

"I love to bake and paint," she said.

As for next fall, Holmes wants to stay in state for college and graduate with a nursing degree. Later on, she wants to study to be a nurse anesthetist.



Photo by R. BULLOCK

## Adrianna Nichols

By NOLAN ANDLER  
Quill staff writer

Adrianna Nichols (12) plays multiple sports throughout the school year, including cross country running, dance and lacrosse.

During the fall, Nichols is in cross country.

"I've been in cross country for three seasons, starting sophomore year. I joined because a lot of my friends ran and I wanted to try running," she said.

As a team captain, Nichols said she enjoys the sport but experienced some challenges this year.

"I love it but it's hard on the girls team right now because our numbers are really low," she said.

While the small roster makes things tough, she said it helps everyone bond with each other.

"My favorite memories are race days because everyone is supportive of each other," she said.

When fall shifts over to winter, Nichols turns her focus to doing dance, which takes place throughout the year outside of Cooper.

"The competition season really picks up in the winter," she said. "Last season, things went well [but they were] different because we had to wear masks and we did block schedules, so we only went to competitions with only our studio in the building," she said.

To wrap up the school sports season, Nichols plays lacrosse in spring.

"I'm the starting goalie," she said.

For college, Nichols said she wants to major in sports medicine and either play college lacrosse or minor in dance.



Photo by LIFETOUGH

## Bruno Coelho Carvalho

By ANDREW HAGGE  
Quill staff writer

Bruno Coelho Carvalho (12) is a foreign exchange student who played soccer in the fall for the Cooper boys soccer team. He next plans on competing in swimming through the winter season. Finally, in the spring, he hopes to join the boys tennis squad.

Coelho Carvalho said he has been playing soccer since he was young.

"I don't remember when I started, but I've always loved soccer," Coelho Carvalho said.

During the 2021 soccer season, Coelho Carvalho said he loved being able to meet new people through joining the team. He also said he was glad to finally be able to play soccer again after the pandemic spread across the world.

Coelho Carvalho said his favorite memories of soccer this year were "training with [his] squad and playing alongside them on the pitch."

Outside of sports, Coelho Carvalho said his time at Cooper has been interesting given his status as a foreign exchange student. He said the classes he experienced in Brazil have been different than those at Cooper, but he has still enjoyed his time going to school in the U.S.

"I like all my classes," he said.

Outside of school, some hobbies that he enjoys are playing the guitar, reading, traveling and watching TV shows, especially sports.

Coelho Carvalho said he is looking forward to college but hasn't decided where he will go. However, Coelho Carvalho said he will continue athletics after high school and for the years to come.



Photo by R. BULLOCK



## MLB PLAYOFFS

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first, but a three-run homer by Kyle Tucker put the game and the Red Sox's season away. The Astros won 5-0 to advance to the World Series.

### National League Championship Series L.A. Dodgers vs. Atlanta Braves

This was a rematch from last year's NLCS, during which the Braves got a 3-1 lead but couldn't close it out. In game one, the Dodgers got a 2-1 lead, but third baseman Austin Riley played hero for the Braves, hitting the tying homer and driving in the game-winning run to lead Atlanta to a 3-2 victory and the series lead.

In game two, the Dodgers tried everything to pull away, but the Braves wouldn't let them. L.A. went up 2-0 early thanks to a two-run bomb by short stop Corey Seager. The Braves followed it up with a two-run homer from former Dodger Joc Pederson. The Dodgers got another two-run lead before the Braves tied it up 4-4. In the ninth, Eddie Rosario became the hero for Atlanta by bringing in the game-winning run. The Braves won 5-4 and went to L.A. with a 2-0 series lead.

As for game three, the Braves got out to a 5-2 lead and looked like they were going to take full control of the series, but the Dodgers, led by Cody Bellinger and Mookie Betts, came back and won 6-5 to get on the series board.

During game four, Atlanta got out to another 5-2 lead, but this time they didn't look back. The Braves cruised to a 9-2 win behind left fielder Eddie Rosario's big day. He went 4-5 with three runs and two homers.

In game five, the Braves jumped out to another 3-1 lead. However, the Dodgers, behind third baseman Chris Taylor, didn't want to go down just yet. Taylor had a near-perfect day, going 4-5 with three home runs. He carried the Dodgers to an 11-2 win and sent the series back to Atlanta.

Finally, in game six, a three-run homer by Eddie Rosario carried the Braves to a 4-2 win and the National League Pennant in front of their home fans.

### World Series

#### Atlanta Braves vs. Houston Astros

And then it was down to two: Atlanta and Houston. These two teams were trying to erase different narratives that had been haunting them. For the Braves, it was the narrative of how Georgia sports can't get it done. Meanwhile, for Houston, it was the narrative of how they can't win without cheating.

During this whole series, the Braves were too much for Houston. In game one, they won 6-2. In fact, they pounced on Houston early, going up 5-0 in the top of the third. Then, in game two, the Astros' four runs in the second carried them to a 7-2 win.

When the series shifted to Atlanta, the Braves pulled away. In games three and four, the Braves won 2-0 and 3-2, respectively. While the Braves' batting wasn't good, their pitching was lights out.

Next, in game five, a first inning grand slam by Braves centerfielder Adam Duvall made it look like the series was over right there, but the Astros did not go down. They erased the 4-0 deficit and got it tied at 4-4. After a Freeman homer, the Astros then exploded, winning 9-5 and taking the series back to Houston.

Game six was tight early, but a three-run homer by Jorge Soler for the Braves blew it open. The Braves built off a 3-0 lead and won 7-0 to take the title. After last year's heartbreak and the common stereotype of Georgia teams collapsing with big leads, the Braves closed it out and won when it mattered.

This was a very fun post-season, and with all the talent returning on every team, expect next year to be the same.

# Fall season saw success for Hawks teams

Cooper athletes hope to take momentum from their 2021 performances with them into a new conference next school year



Photo by MS. HAGGE

The boys cross country team enjoyed a triumphant day at the Brookside Invitational meet on October 12, with runners taking first and third place.

By ANDREW HAGGE  
Quill staff writer

Starting off the first of three seasons on the 2021-2022 sports calendar, the fall was a promising beginning for Cooper. The nine fall sports teams did quite well across the board, considering the setbacks and challenges they faced. The busing issues managed to affect every team while some had trouble in recruiting new players. But throughout every struggle, the fall teams toughed it out and managed to have an exciting season. As we transition to a new section next year, Cooper's fall teams will enjoy a more competitive conference in which Cooper will be more viable.

### Girls Cross Country

According to head coach Ms. Jones, the small team pushed through the hardships of only having three runners and multiple injuries. Despite these issues, Jones noted that they topped their personal-best times and their newest runner, Shana Somado (11), posted her best time in her first run.

Additionally, the captain of the team, Adrianna Nichols (12), dropped two minutes off of her personal record. Adding onto that, she also earned Academic All-Conference.

With so few runners, Jones said the athletes pushed each other and showed great leadership.

"I hope to grow our team next fall," she said. "We are a small team but I expect to see our numbers grow for the 2022 season."

### Boys Cross Country

The team finished ninth out of 10 teams, barely behind St. Louis Park, in the Metro West Conference. Among the entire squad of runners, head coach Mr. Zuccola said he saw the team's times "drop considerably" through each meet and during practice.

One highlight of the season was the Brookside Invitational meet, where Magnus Korstad (12) finished on top of the podium with first place and Joseph Kubly (12) snatched third. Both runners managed to also run the 5K in under 18 minutes by the end of the season, with Korstad achieving a 17:22 and Kubly running a 17:33.

With the loss of four seniors, Zuccola said the new recruits and junior class look strong for next season's team.

"2022-2023 should be a good season for the boys cross country team," Zuccola said.

### Adapted Soccer

Part way through the season, the Robins adapted soccer

team was 3-3. They saw newer players taking on the challenge by "stepping up and contributing in big ways," according to head coach Mr. DeMorett. The team also had many players scoring goals that hadn't previously done so.

With only one senior on their team, next fall is quite promising as they look to continue upon the development of those newly scoring players.

"[The] outlook is good for the 2022 season as the team only has one senior," DeMorett said.

### Volleyball

Highlights of the promising volleyball season were players getting their highest career kills in games. For example, captain LaMya Holmes (12) managed 16 against Bloomington Kennedy and 20 while facing Richfield. They won those two

### Girls Swimming and Diving

Senior night was a huge deal for the girls swimming team as they beat Columbia Heights for their first win in two years. The squad finished 1-11 overall but had some close losses in their dual meets.

Two of the standout athletes on the team were Ella Cooley (7) and Emma Launderville (12).

"Ella burst onto the scene and very quickly became the Hawks' go-to swimmer," head coach Mr. Mau said.

The outlook is very strong for next season as they return eight swimmers and their top four returning swimmers are fast. Additionally, Mau said he is looking to add more swimmers next season to strengthen the team as they hope to improve on their dual meet performance.



Photo by MS. SNAPKO

The girls soccer team's record did not reflect their high level of competitiveness.

matches, which helped lead them to their 2-13 record.

Holmes said that Timiya Reese (12) and Brooke Chang (12) were among the standout players on the team who showed major improvement, helping the team go farther.

"Timiya was just overall one of the best middles I've played with and always found a way to make the team laugh on and off the court. She was always blocking and getting kills for our team. Brooke came back after two years and has improved so much over the season. She always had a positive attitude. Even if she made a small mistake, she always found a way to fix it," Holmes said.

Holmes and the other players are quite optimistic about the varsity team next year. They hope to see improvements that change the team in a positive way.

### Girls Soccer

Stringing together some strong games, the girls soccer team managed a 1-12-1 season record. The squad's captains, Kaidin Camp (12), Jace Herman (12), Alyce Madson (12) and Clare Snapko (12), held down the fort, scoring all goals for the team this season.

Throughout the entire season, the team remained high spirited and kept plugging along with tough-fought matches, even though their record does not necessarily show that. In fact, head coach Mr. Wetherall said that multiple players earned All-Conference and All-Conference Honorable Mention honors.

"Clare earned All-Conference honors and was an All-State nominee, while both Kaidin and Jace earned All-Conference Honorable Mention awards," Wetherall said.

When it comes to 2022, Wetherall said he is hoping to "keep growing" and will continue "building the community."

### Boys Soccer

The boys soccer squad started out undefeated through their first three games but ended the season at a 3-12-1 record. However, the record doesn't show how well they played and how hard they fought against multiple different teams that went on to the state tournament.

Multiple players had amazing moments on the team. Head coach Mr. Getchell cited the "ridiculous saves" by Jayden Hove (12) and a strong back line led by Johnny Engwall (12), which helped lead the team forward against some top-10 teams in the state.

Looking toward next fall, Getchell said that the team has the potential to be contenders in conference and sections.

"We return most of our starters from last year's team and have the potential with those returning players to be a really strong team in conference and sections," Getchell said.

### Girls Tennis

The girls tennis team tripled in size from six players last year to 18 athletes in 2021. This was enough to have a full team this season, unlike the previous year. Head coach Ms. Navalta explained that captains Bailey Morehouse (12) and Mimi Otu (12) were nervous they would not have a team this year, but after seeing "numbers increase every week at the beginning of the season, they were extremely happy."

While the team had an overall record of 0-9, Navalta said that statistic doesn't show what they were doing during those matches.

"The girls fought hard every match," she said. "There were matches that were hard physically and mentally on some, especially for our new players, but the cheering from each other really helped uplift those difficult times."

Next season, the team hopes to push summer tennis opportunities and get more involved at the middle school level. Navalta said they look to "have enough players to fill an entire junior varsity and varsity team" in 2022.

[Editor's note: Due to its success in advancing to the state tournament, the Hawks football team was not done with its season at the time this story and issue went to press. Full coverage of the football team and its post-season journey will be featured in the next issue of *The Quill*.]